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Forty-seventh session

REPORT OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

DEVELOPMENT AND INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC COOPERATION

EXTERNAL DEBT CRISIS AND DEVELOPMENT

Letter dated 3 February 1992 from the Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit to you the Appeal of the Prime Minister of Ukraine, His Excellency Vitold P. Fokin, to the world financial circles (see annex).

I request you to circulate the text of the present letter and its annex as an official document of the forty-seventh session of the General Assembly, under the items entitled "Report of the Economic and Social Council", "Development and international economic cooperation" and "External debt crisis and development".

(Signed) Guennadi I. OUDOVENKO
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of Ukraine
to the United Nations

ANNEX

Appeal of the Prime Minister of Ukraine to the world financial circles

Ukraine, the independence of which was confirmed by its 52 million people on 1 December 1991 and recognized by the majority of nations,

Being a founding State of the United Nations and a number of international economic organizations,

Firmly adhering to its international obligations as well as those of the former Union of Soviet Socialist Republics,

Signed, on 4 December 1991, together with other States members of the former Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, the Treaty on Legal Succession of the State Foreign Debt and Assets of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

Thus, Ukraine committed itself to pay part of the external debt of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics through the Bank for Foreign Economic Activities, which has been authorized under the Treaty to be an agent in servicing the debt.

With the aim of abiding steadily by the word and spirit of the Treaty, Ukraine decided to become a member of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. Together with experts of those outstanding international organizations, the Government of Ukraine drew up, for the first time in its history, its balance of payments and determined the limit of the foreign debts to be approved by the Verkhovna Rada (Parliament) of Ukraine.

In conditions of extremely hard economic crisis, hyperinflation and impoverishment of diverse groups of the population, the Government is trying to find the required currency to pay in proper time its share of the debt. An export promotion system is being created urgently, an Export-Import Bank is being founded and the National Customs Service is being reinforced.

But the actions of the other parties to the Treaty of 4 December 1991 are raising anxiety. The representatives of Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan and other States-successors of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, have approved, without our authorized representative, a Statute of the Interstate Council to be legitimate under the Treaty and to take decisions concerning debt servicing.

The activities of the Interstate Council actually contradict the Treaty assumptions. The internal and external gold-device assets, real estate and property abroad of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, about which information is not available for other States successors, are being appropriated unilaterally. Having, according to the unilaterally adopted Statute, 61.1 per cent of the votes, Russia has the real possibility of legalizing its actions by the decisions of the Interstate Council.

The decision to stop current operations of Vnesheconombank of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics was taken by the Interstate Council at the end of last year, which caused great damage to the economic interests of Ukraine.

Coming out for equal rights on the solving of these questions, Ukraine cannot agree with the dictate of one country, whatever potential it possesses. Thus, Ukraine addresses itself to the world financial circles with a request to:

(a) Take from the general sum of the debt in hard currency of the former Union of Soviet Socialist Republics the Ukrainian share of 16.37 per cent for facilitation of the debt payment by Ukraine, thus meeting the requirements of the Treaty of 4 December 1991 (article 3);

(b) Give the direct opportunity to the National Bank of Ukraine and the Export-Import Bank of Ukraine to take part in all kinds of financial operations on the world market for timely fulfilment of debt obligations in order to provide the development of the market economy of Ukraine;

(c) Recognize and promote the property rights fulfilment of the Ukrainian share of 16.37 per cent of all kinds of assets in the territory of the former Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and abroad, which will be a necessary guarantee of the fulfilment of Ukrainian international financial obligations. As an interim measure, Ukraine requests the suspension of the property rights of Russia on the objects of the former Union of Soviet Socialist Republics property abroad until its actual division between States-successors.

With the aim of accomplishing these proposals, the Government of Ukraine offers to convene an international conference in Kiev on 18 and 19 February 1992 and to invite to this Conference authorized representatives of the creditors, the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank.

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HUMAN RIGHTS QUESTIONS

SECURITY COUNCIL
Forty-seventh year

Note verbale dated 5 February 1992 from the Permanent Mission of Panama to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

The Permanent Mission of the Republic of Panama to the United Nations presents its compliments to the Secretary-General of the United Nations and, in its capacity as Chairman of the Latin American and Caribbean Group for the month of February, has the honour to enclose and bring to his attention the Statement by the Group adopted yesterday on the subject of the events in Venezuela (see annex).

The Permanent Mission of the Republic of Panama would be grateful if the Secretary-General of the United Nations would have the text of this note and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly at its forty-seventh session, under the item entitled "Human rights questions", and of the Security Council.

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ANNEX

Statement by the Latin American and Caribbean Group in the United Nations, adopted in New York on 4 February 1992

1. With reference to the attempted coup d'état which took place in Venezuela today, the Latin American and Caribbean Group in the United Nations expresses its strong condemnation of those who have sought to impair the political stability and reverse the democratic strengthening and progress of our continent.

2. It is all the more deplorable that the attempted military coup in Venezuela, apart from having sought to undermine the democratic institutions of that fraternal republic, should have been directed against the physical integrity of one of the most respected leaders in the region and should have led to the regrettable loss of many lives.

3. With regard to these events, we are convinced that the isolated actions of groups which are unaware of the force of history can serve only to strengthen us in our adherence to and defence of democratic values.

4. We are convinced that the Venezuelan people, headed by its President Carlos Andrés Pérez, will rise fully to this challenge and can rely in doing so on the fullest support of all Latin American and Caribbean peoples.

5. The Latin American and Caribbean Group expresses its resolute support for and solidarity with the people and Government of Venezuela.

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GENERAL AND COMPLETE DISARMAMENT: REGIONAL DISARMAMENT

REVIEW OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS AND DECISIONS ADOPTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY AT ITS TENTH SPECIAL SESSION

Letter dated 4 February 1992 from the Permanent Representative of Portugal to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit the text, in English and French, of a declaration of the European Community and its member States on North Korea, issued at Lisbon and Brussels, on 31 January 1992 (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the text of the present letter and its annex circulated as an official document of the forty-seventh session of the General Assembly under the items entitled "General and complete disarmament: regional disarmament" and "Review of the implementation of the recommendations and decisions adopted by the General Assembly at its tenth special session".

(Signed) Fernando REINO
Ambassador of Portugal
Permanent Representative to the
United Nations

ANNEX

Declaration on North Korea, issued on 31 January 1992
by the European Community and its States members

The Community and its States members welcome the signature of the safeguards agreement of the Non-proliferation Treaty by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, on 30 January 1992. In view of this important new development, they look forward to the early ratification and full implementation of the agreement, allowing the International Atomic Energy Agency to carry out inspections in accordance with the established procedures of the Agency.

The Community and its States members also express their hope that this new step, taken together with the agreement between the two Koreas on reconciliation, non-aggression, exchange and cooperation with the Joint Declaration for a Non-nuclear Korean Peninsula, both reached last December, will contribute to the strengthening of the inter-Korean dialogue and the peace and stability in the region.

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IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECLARATION ON THE GRANTING OF INDEPENDENCE TO COLONIAL COUNTRIES AND PEOPLES

Letter dated 4 February 1992 from the Permanent Representative of the United States of America to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly

The United States, as an administering Power, recognizes its responsibilities under Chapter XI of the Charter of the United Nations and will continue to fulfil those responsibilities. In this era of a new-found spirit of cooperation in the United Nations, the United States has been willing to continue to cooperate with decolonization committees in the United Nations so long as it has been clear that the committees are adopting a more constructive approach. As the number of remaining non-self-governing territories diminishes, it is increasingly important that United Nations decolonization committees pay more attention to those territories' particular evolution towards self-government.

We regret, however, that despite the best efforts of the United States and others, the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples has not yet fully set aside those practices of the past which focused on an outmoded agenda in favour of new approaches aimed at addressing the specific needs of the few remaining non-self-governing territories.

This year, the Special Committee again forwarded to the Fourth Committee a number of resolutions which contained outmoded, irrelevant and repetitive rhetoric and again took up issues which were inappropriate for Special Committee consideration - South Africa, apartheid, military activities in United States territories, Puerto Rico and the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands. While the United States is pleased that the Fourth Committee took the first steps this year towards changing those resolutions, we continue to note with sorrow and concern the Special Committee's determination to adhere to an outdated approach.

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It is with this in mind that the United States has decided after careful thought to suspend its cooperation with the Special Committee until it takes the steps needed to bring its work in line with the current focus and spirit of the United Nations. This decision will not have any impact on my Government's continuing cooperation with you, Mr. President, or with the General Assembly. We believe that the Special Committee should move tangibly towards discussing specific issues important both to the remaining territories and the administering States in place of, not in addition to, issues that are not relevant to those territories and which are, in any event, fully treated elsewhere by the United Nations. The United States desires an environment in which the specific concerns of the remaining territories can be considered in an open, balanced and objective manner. We seek an environment in which the administering States will be able to cooperate fully with all United Nations decolonization committees.

The United States urges members of the Special Committee this year to reform its work and to address as a matter of priority those issues of significance to the remaining territories. We look forward to reviewing the Committee's work in the hope that the common ground which was the basis for the acceptance of Chapter XI of the Charter can be restored in the decolonization committee.

I should be grateful if you would have the text of the present letter circulated as an official document of the forty-seventh session of the General Assembly under the item entitled "Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples".

(Signed) Thomas R. PICKERING

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SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Letter dated 6 February 1992 from the Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit the text of the Final Declaration adopted at the Leeds Castle International Conference on the Prevention of Disability, organized by the International Initiative Against Avoidable Disablement (IMPACT) and held at Leeds Castle in the United Kingdom from 1 to 3 September 1991 (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would arrange to have the text of the present letter and its annex circulated as an official document of the forty-seventh session of the General Assembly under the item entitled "Social development".

(Signed) D. H. HANNAY

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ANNEX

Leeds Castle Declaration - 1991*

1. The Conference emphasizes that, in the next decade, at least 30 million people could be saved from disability through preventive action. If basic surgery were available, over 40 million disabled people in developing countries could have their sight, movement or hearing restored at a unit cost of between $15 and $40.

2. The decade which has passed since the first Leeds Castle Seminar on the Prevention of Disablement has witnessed the beginnings of this revolutionary change. The combined efforts of United Nations agencies, Governments, non-governmental groups, organizations of disabled persons and the IMPACT initiative hold clear promise for even greater advances in the control of disability over the next decade. Advances are possible in many fields, particularly in those of:

(a) Universal immunization utilizing currently available and new vaccines;

(b) Provision of essential nutrients such as iodine, vitamin A and iron;

(c) Safe motherhood;

(d) Alleviation of birth asphyxia;

(e) Community-wide programmes for parasitic disease control;

(f) Prevention and early treatment of middle ear disease;

(g) Improved treatment and prevention of leprosy;

(h) Prevention of injury;

(i) Reduction of the use of tobacco;

(j) Provision of basic surgery to restore sight, hearing and mobility.

3. This was the major conclusion of an international gathering of development experts, health administrators, clinical specialists, voluntary organizations and politicians, held at Leeds Castle, England, from 1 to 3 September 1991.

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* This Declaration highlights certain important points to be elaborated in the full report of the Leeds Castle Conference, which will be published.

4. There have been many notable advances during the past decade. Immunization rates have improved remarkably. Advances in medical research hold great promise for new vaccines to prevent a wider range of disability-producing diseases. The Global Programme for the Prevention of Blindness is already a success story. There is excellent progress towards control of the four diseases (cataract, blinding malnutrition, trachoma and river blindness) which together cause two thirds of the blindness in the developing world.

5 The International Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Decade, although short of its goal of universal coverage, is acting against important primary causes of disability.

6. These achievements were made possible by the adoption of a variety of flexible and innovative approaches and mark a turning point in mankind's fight against disability.

7. Global programmes are being planned for the coming decade against hearing loss, which affects some 70 million people, and in which middle ear disease is a major cause. A similar approach can be used in relation to certain forms of orthopaedic and neurological impairments, which together are estimated to incapacitate 160 million people.

8. Some 200 million people are afflicted by mental disabilities, the prevention of much of which could be achieved by two initiatives: (a) the better training of village midwives and the provision of inexpensive equipment for resuscitating newborns with birth asphyxia; and (b) the provision of iodine supplementation, where necessary.

The next decade

9. Despite these remarkable advances, the number of disabled people in the world continues to increase with population growth and ageing in developing countries and with ageing in industrialized countries. Other rapidly increasing problems include lung cancer and other disabilities caused by the spread of tobacco use, particularly in developing countries, and the AIDS pandemic. Unless decisive action is taken, the present number of disabled persons, estimated at no less than 500 million, could double during the next 40 years. Disability on that scale, at its worst in the poorest countries, represents a prime cause of deprivation and economic loss. The means for radically changing this situation exist and are highly cost-effective but still inadequately implemented.

10. In proposing an agenda of action to the year 2000, the Conference fully endorses the objectives and achievements of the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons and the targets already set by United Nations agencies. The continuation and development of the role of the IMPACT initiative as a link between the United Nations system and the resources and managerial talent of the private sector were reaffirmed. Amongst specific proposals made by the Conference are the following:

(a) The establishment by the Government of each country of a 10-year national programme to prevent and, where possible, reverse avoidable disability. Such programmes should clearly indicate the priorities appropriate to that country's health problems and should be both realistic and sustainable;

(b) Recognition by aid agencies and reaffirmation by the United Nations family that the prevention of avoidable disability should be a prime objective of development policy, for which enhanced international resources should be made available. Prevention and control of disablement is an integral part of the development process, placing the human community not only at the centre of this process but as the prime mover;

(c) On the model of the Prevention of Blindness Programme, other global programmes should be rapidly developed for the prevention of loss of hearing, physical disability and mental retardation. Recognizing the multisectoral nature of such problems and the need for an interdisciplinary approach, the main thrust must be at the level of primary health, and every possible increase in efficiency should be secured by integration, linkages and shared use of staff, infrastructure and institutions;

(d) Disabled people and their organizations throughout the world should be fully consulted and encouraged to participate as essential partners in all action to prevent avoidable disability;

(e) Each country should establish policies for the numbers and training required of all forms of health personnel, with particular attention being paid to the most appropriate use of different levels of skills and to the integrated working of primary health care teams;

(f) In all interventions, it is essential that there should be an adequate infrastructure and good management to ensure that they benefit those in greatest need. The interventions should be monitored to confirm that they are effective and efficient and so that policies can be modified should that prove necessary;

(g) Medical research organizations should give increased priority to the control of causes of disability and to operational research to improve delivery of services and reduce their costs;

(h) Educational programmes and the media should be encouraged to alert public attention to the risk factors of disability and should remove misunderstanding and oppose discriminatory practices, which, too often, segregate disabled people.